Colchester Public Schools

"We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world."

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REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: DISTRICT GOALS

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BACKGROUND:

Colchester Public Schools established a district mission and goals in 2018/19. The mission, *We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world*, led the District to focus on supporting student academic achievement and real-world problem-solving. The first three goals directly reinforced the mission, whereas the fourth goal focused on developing the District's systems of responsiveness to students and the fifth goal focused on aligning the budget. The five goals were:

1. We will raise academic growth expectations for all students.
2. Students will develop innovative thinking and authentic problem-solving skills by engaging in rigorous tasks.
3. Our instruction and curriculum facilitate integrated, real-world learning that maximizes the individual potential of each student.
4. We will increase our capacity to respond to student academic, emotional and social needs through partnerships with caregivers and the community.
5. We align the budget with the district vision and the needs of our students.

RATIONALE FOR THE REVISION:

Districts typically set 5-year goals–the time at which it takes for real change to occur in a school district. The COVID19 pandemic disrupted our educational system, and the District has a strong need for a revised focus. The District has identified from our sources of data and observations that our students feel increasingly disconnected from school and are experiencing higher than normal levels of anxiety. The District also continues to identify gaps in academic performance amongst all student demographic groups. Changes in staff, operations, and organizational structures have also resulted in a loss of institutional knowledge in the District.

NEW DISTRICT GOALS:

The District plans to recalibrate its focus and streamline its effort by focusing on three, rather than five goals. The District will maintain an academic goal; however, that goal will be focused on supporting all students to meet their individual academic *growth* goal each year. Growth

goals will be rigorous, yet achievable. Setting a focus on growth rather than achievement will allow schools to address the academic performance of both high achieving students, as well as students who are experiencing academic challenges. The District will increase its response to student social-emotional needs by setting a second goal that is focused on supporting student acceptance, connectedness, and readiness to learn. The third goal will focus the District's effort to strengthen our operational systems and ensure all staff are supported in learning those systems. Opportunities for change in this area range from refining procedures for hiring to updating school safety and security protocols.

The new District goals for 2022-2027 are:

1. All of our students annually meet high academic standards for growth.
2. The climate and culture in our schools support student acceptance, connectedness, and readiness to learn.
3. The District is operationally efficient and effective.

NEXT STEPS:

The District will work with the leadership team to establish a strategy to achieve these goals and indicators of progress. Next, school leadership teams will make revisions to their School Improvement Plans (SIP) to ensure they are aligned with the District's strategy. (NOTE: Schools have already developed with their faculty and leadership team SIPs that include a focus on student academics–it is anticipated that only small revisions to SIPs will be necessary.). The District leadership teams will then work to establish a budget that aligns with the new District and School goals while also sharing with staff and faculty the strategy for improvement.